

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF PELTOSAARI PROJECT

From an excluded reality towards a socially inclusive strategy in
the area

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Thesis, autumn 2012

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Degree Programme in Social Services

Bachelor of Social Services (UAS)

ABSTRACT

Mazarakis, Nicolas. Social aspects of Peltosaari Project. From an excluded reality towards a socially inclusive strategy in the area. 71p., 2 appendices. Language: English. Järvenpää, Autumn 2012.

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences. Degree Programme in Social Services.

Degree: Bachelor of Social Services.

The aim of this study is to describe the social aspects of Peltosaari project. The thesis intends to explain the kind of social aspects the Peltosaari project has generated. Special emphasis is laid on matters of exclusion realities that characterize Peltosaari area and its residents. Also the research aims at finding ways, policies and solutions that will change the exclusion reality towards a beneficiary inclusion strategy for the area and its inhabitants with the help of Peltosaari Project. The study reveals the actions that Peltosaari Project has had until now taken to promote inclusion tactics. The research describes what still is needed to be done towards a policy with inclusion realities in the Peltosaari area.

This is a qualitative study. Personal interviews, ethnographic interviews, active participation and participatory observation have been used in gathering the information. In total, eight interviews were conducted. The research was carried out in autumn 2010 and in spring 2011.

Main results of the study show that social aspects of the Peltosaari project are the Housing Clinic, the Peltosaari Parliament and the Peltosaari project as an organization that promotes community development and strategies towards inclusion. The study also reveals some major social problems that Peltosaari area faces. These social problems stigmatize the whole Peltosaari area as an excluded community. Recommendations for an inclusive policy in the Peltosaari area are presented.

Key words: Community Development, Housing Clinic, Social Aspects, Social Exclusion, Peltosaari Project, Riihimäki.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Three years ago the municipality of Riihimäki launched a project called “Peltosaari project” in an effort to vanish the bad reputation of an urban area in its district under the name Peltosaari. The municipality of Riihimäki with its technical and financial partners is responsible for research, planning and implementation of the Peltosaari project.

The aims of Peltosaari project are to change the building structure and the environment in order to create a more attractive Peltosaari area. In parallel it aims to eradicate the bad reputation of the area by applying inclusive strategies that will try to solve the major social problems that the area and its residents are facing. Solving social problems will result in the now excluded Peltosaari area to become an attractive inclusive area that will attract investors and inhabitants.

With the help of Peltosaari project the implementation and the renovation of buildings in the whole Peltosaari area will result in community development. This community development will trigger as a result social development. As consequences of social development, social aspects and social problems will arise. Exclusive realities will be faced and inclusive tactics will be produced (see Figure 1).

As a student of a University of Applied Sciences I carried out two practical placement training periods as part of my Bachelor of Social Services studies stationed at the “Housing Clinic”, one of the organizations created by Peltosaari project. I became interested in the aims of Peltosaari project and I decided to produce my thesis in connection with the project. Motivation for this decision was the social dimensions that Peltosaari project triggers in connection with the major social problems that the area of Peltosaari faces. The prospective of a positive community development of the area with the use of the implementation of the Peltosaari project influences my final decision. My professional and personal development was enriched through my placement experiences and my thesis work.



Figure 1: Phases of development in the Peltosaari project.

My studies at the DIAK University of Applied Sciences in Finland are based on community development directions and issues. My duties during my two practical placement training periods at the Housing Clinic that lasted six months were relevant to community development. Part of my duties was to inform the clients and service users of the Housing Clinic the ways in which Peltosaari project through building development and community development is going to affect their lives. Through my active participation and my participatory observation I gained important knowledge and experiences regarding the community development methods that were applied in the project. The fact that the entire Peltosaari project is based on community development and my studies are based on community development influenced my decision to write this thesis.

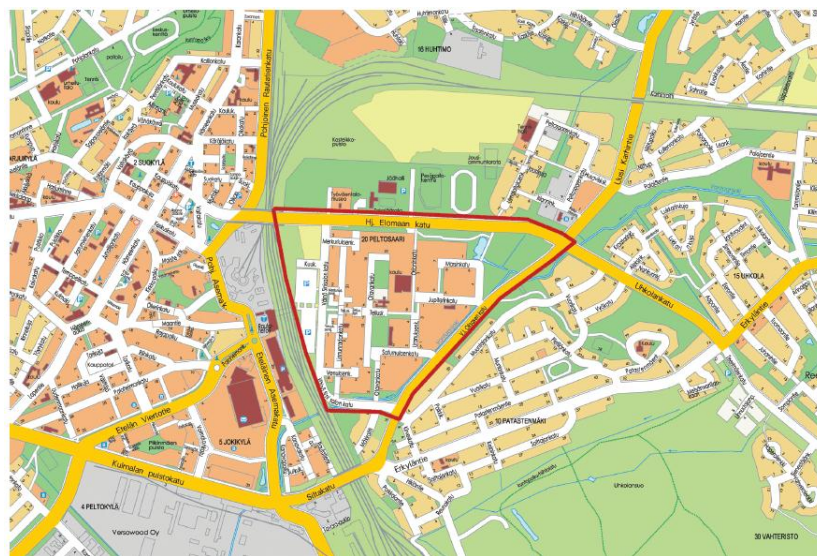
This thesis aims to describe the social aspects of Peltosaari project. In addition, it aims to clarify “What kind of social aspects the Peltosaari Project generates”. Special emphasis is on matters of exclusion realities that characterize the Peltosaari area and its residents. Also the research aims at finding ways, policies and solutions that will change the exclusion reality towards a beneficiary inclusion strategy for the area and its inhabitants with the help of the Peltosaari Project. “What actions has the Peltosaari Project taken until now to promote inclusion tactics?” and “What still is needed to be done towards a policy which aims at inclusion?”

2 UNDERSTANDING PELTOSAARI PROJECT

Chapter 2 provides information concerning the area of Peltosaari and an analysis of the social situation in Peltosaari area. Necessary structural and organizational details on how the project functions are mentioned. A brief reference regarding previous research in Peltosaari area is presented.

2.1 Peltosaari area

Peltosaari is a suburb area that belongs to the town of Riihimäki. Riihimäki has a population of 28 785 residents (by estimated figures on 31.1.2010) and belongs to the municipality area of Kanta-Häme. (Riihimäki 2011.)



Picture 1: Red triangle shows Peltosaari area in Riihimäki (Peltosaaren yleinen ideakilpailu 2010, 9).

Picture 1 shows a map of Riihimäki. The area inside the red triangle is Peltosaari area.

The urban area of Peltosaari has a population of about 2700 inhabitants. The area was developed to solve population growth problems in Riihimäki during the sixties, seventies and eighties. Building constructions started in 1973 and ended in 1993. The area was constructed near the city center in order to serve a population of about 3200 residents. The region current has a population of about 2700 inhabitants. (Innovatiivinen yhdyskuntarakentamisen hankintamenettely 2010, 3.)



Picture 2: Peltosaari air photoshot (Peltosaaren yleinen ideakilpailu. Kilpailuohjelma 2010, 11).



Picture 3: A clear view of Peltosaari area, Riihimäki (Liikkuva Peltsi 2010, 3).

Pictures 2 and 3 are photos of the Peltosaari area. Picture 2 is an aerial photo of Peltosaari and picture 3 a close view shot of the same area.

2.2 Situation in Peltosaari area

The Technical Research Centre of Finland (known as VTT) has stated in October 2010 that the maximum of the suburbs in Finland need restoration. Such area by VTT is Peltosaari area in Riihimäki. Reforming the area will also push towards the creation of local services for the residents of the area which are now lacking. The municipality of Riihimäki is responsible for the renovation and the people of Peltosaari are starting to get involved also in the development of services in the area through the Peltosaari project. The local economy is in a difficult state. The income of the locals and their social status is in weaker position compared to the rest of the inhabitants of Riihimäki area. Last year a VTT investigation resulted in the fact that the people of Peltosaari were very worried about their social problems. This reality causes them to feel unsafe. A pilot housing under the name “Housing Clinic” is opened to help them with their problems. (VTT 2010.)

A SWOT analysis conducted by the administrative authorities of the Peltosaari project revealed that the weaknesses and threats in the Peltosaari area show the level of the social and economic status of the area and its people to be of high risk. Such indicators were proved to be: The weak and poor reputation and image of the area compare to the rest of Riihimäki. Social-economic factors were very poor. There is unemployment rate of 27% and inactive citizens 50% of the total areal population (Figure 2). The number of families with children has declined in latest years. Services are at a low level. The interest of investors and new inhabitants to move to Peltosaari is of minimum interest. The area is in a deteriorating situation. (ARA, 8.)

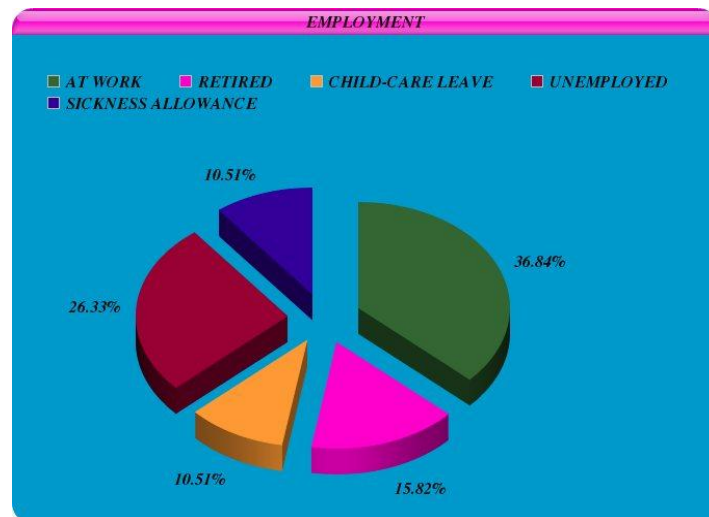


Figure 2: Current employment situation in Peltosaari area. Asumisen uudistaminen -laivaseminaari 26 – 28.9.2011. (Väkevä-Harjula 2011, 30.) Adapted from the original table.

Figure 2 reveals the results of a study conducted by the administrative authorities of Peltosaari project regarding the employment situation in Peltosaari area.

2.3 Organizational structure of the Peltosaari project

According to Nieminen (2011, 1) basic forms to organize work in work organizations are: hierarchy with the possibility of different organizational charts or graphics, networks with variety of different constructions of systems and markets with the variation of market arrangements. Nieminen (2011, 5) states that the origins of management are discovered in hierarchy which is a widespread way to organize agreements between individuals and leaders. In addition he states that the origins of management are also discovered in human agency which hints to inescapable conflicts between front-runners and their subjects. Nieminen declares in his own words that

Managing and leading is never a one-way street.

Historical, economic and cultural modification is substantial. (Nieminen 2011, 5.)

As figure 3 shows the management hierarchy of the Peltosaari project goes through specific channels from bottom towards the top of the management of the project. These channels are:

Peltosaari Parliament → Housing Clinic → Peltosaari project →
 → Technical center → Town Hall

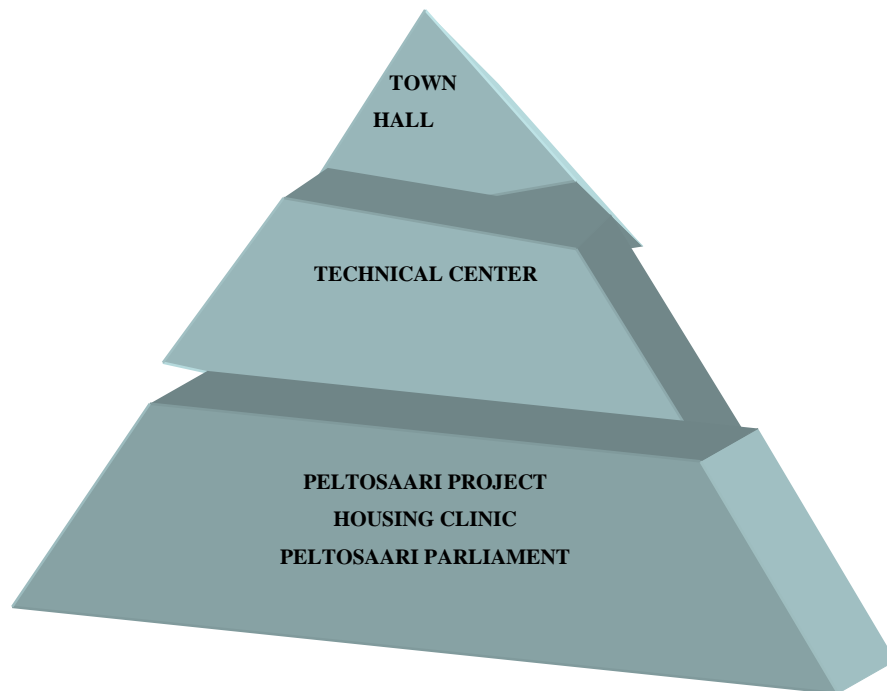


Figure 3: Hierarchical Management of Peltosaari project.

The leadership of Peltosaari project combines network and teamwork management which reports to a joint team of the project manager and the supervisory board (politicians, executive managers of different departments of the Town Hall such as environmental, security, research and finance department), ARA, VTT, TEKES and the residents' unions of Peltosaari.

Davies (2003, 11) states that

A project is further possible to be successful if it gets support from a large number of residents. Also, a project promoting or supported by the mainstream of the community is more expected to obtain support from exterior organizations, such as funding agencies. (Davies 2003, 11.)

Peltosaari project as a whole including the Housing Clinic has three partners: The financing partners are Town hall of Riihimäki, ARA (The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland), TEKES (The Finnish Funding Agency for Technology Innovation) and VTT (Technical Research Centre of Finland). The Housing Clinic is financed by ARA (through SILTA Elävään Lähiöön, Lähiöojelma (Suburb programme which accounts for 20% between years 2008-2011) and from municipality of Riihimäki 80% through state funds.

The cooperation partners are real estate agencies, businesses director networks, private business networks, church, universities of applied sciences (DIAK, LAUREA, HAMK, and HYRIA), unemployment office and the Riihimäki industrial village. In addition the media, the police, the city of Turku, Jyrkälän polku, Järvenpää Mestariasunnnot, Tammela Tampere, Forssa Housing cluster and Golden Homes in Kent, United Kingdom are involved in the tactical partnership.

The strategic partners are the municipality of Riihimäki, ARA (The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland), TEKES (The Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation) and VTT (Technical Research Centre of Finland). In addition SILTA, SAFA (professional organization of all architects), Social welfare office, residents unions, real estate companies, local private enterprisers, schools, and the board committee of the Town Hall of Riihimäki are involved in the strategic partnership.

More details about partners and networks of the Peltosaari project can be seen on the Figure 4.

Red color: Cooperation partners **Green color: strategic partners**

Such laws that apply the same time to the Peltosaari project as well to its pilot organization “Housing Clinic” are: Act on developing Housing condition (1985/919), Environmental Protection Act (86/2000), Act on Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (468/1994), Act on Residential Leases (481/1995), Act on Support Rural Development (1443/2006), Act on the Housing Fund of Finland (1144/1989), Building Act (370/1958), Code of Real Estate (540/1995), Housing Companies Act (1599/2009, 809/1991), Land Use and Building Act (132/1999, 2000), Land Use and Building degree 895/1999), Building degree (266/1959), Eco-Label Award Scheme (958/1997), Employment Contracts Act (55/2001), Act on the Labour Court (646/1974), Personal Data Act (523/1999), Employment Accidents Act (608/1948), Occupational Safety and Health Act (299/1958), Administrative Procedure Act (598/1982), Non-Discrimination

Act (21/2004) (as amended by Act No 50/2006), human rights and energy laws and acts (which I was not fortunate enough to find, despite my efforts) (Finlex, 2011. In English. Legislation. Translations of Finnish acts and decrees 2011).

The administrative and executive authorities of Peltosaari project are obligated by the above mentioned group of laws and acts. They are obligated to create through Peltosaari project a building environment that will respect the residential and the employment activities in the area. The building and environmental development ought to contribute to the community, societal and eco-efficiency development of Peltosaari area. Strategies and policies of Peltosaari project confirm that Peltosaari will become a new, safe and friendly area for the residents and a place where human rights and environmental laws are respected.

2.4 Overviews of previous studies and projects in Peltosaari area

Following are overviews of previous studies (VTT and University of Helsinki) and several projects done in the Peltosaari area.

2.4.1 VTT study

The VTT for its own interest and for the interest of the municipality of Riihimäki conducted a research in the area of Peltosaari. The results of the research were published in 2010 and mainly concentrate on technical building issues relevant to the building structures in the area and to environmental prospects. Even though, the research has shown that in Peltosaari area social aspects are worth of mentioning in the report.

According to VTT (2010, 5) the biggest quantity of social housing owned by the city of Riihimäki are located in the western side of Peltosaari.

Centralized social housing and biased population structure cause social problems. The market prices of the apartments in the area are remarkably

lower than in other areas with similar location in relation to station and services. (VTT 2010, 5.)

One of the main weaknesses in the area is the social problems that are consequences of the concentration of large amount of social housing especially in the western part of Peltosaari (VTT 2010, 5).

VTT (2010, 5) emphasizes that

A pre-condition for a successful renewal of the whole Peltosaari is development of the socioeconomic conditions in the neighborhood. The main focus should be in the improvement of the neighborhood's position in the regional markets and development of the population base. (VTT 2010, 5.)

2.4.2 University of Helsinki research study

The University of Helsinki in a combined effort with public departments of geology and sociology conducted research in the area of Peltosaari. Local inhabitants, the policy makers and officials of the municipality of Riihimäki were interviewed. The survey results were published in the year 2009 for environmental purposes. Author's report was published under the name: "How to develop a suburb? A case study of Riihimäki Field Island, the metropolis wing." (Author's translation from the official Finnish titles). The University of Helsinki report states in a lot of sections that in the Peltosaari area there are serious social problems that have to be addressed by the authorities that function in the Peltosaari area.

2.4.3 Previous projects in Peltosaari area

In the past, four projects have been carried out in the Peltosaari area. Research has been carried out in all these projects. All these projects for unknown reasons to the public have never been implemented. Basic element in all the four projects was the human-being in connection with social issues.

In chronological order the projects are the “Peltosaari-Project 1995” under the responsibility of the municipality of Riihimäki, the “Peltsi paremmaksi” (7/2000-2/2002) under the responsibility of the social department of the Town Hall of the city of Riihimäki and the “Peltsi paremmaksi II” (1/2002-12/2003) under the responsibility of the social department of the Town Hall of the city of Riihimäki. The most recent project is the “Pemari (Peltsi mallina Riihimäellä) (1/2004-12/2006) under the supervision of the social department of the Town Hall of Riihimäki.

2.5 Similar projects

Other projects from around the globe that have certain similarities with Peltosaari project in terms of societal dimension issues are the Urban II Community Initiative Programme for Komotini in Greece and the “Golding Homes” in Maidstone, Kent, UK.

2.5.1 Urban II Community Initiative Programme for Komotini, Greece

Urban II programs are based on the Guidelines established by the European Commission. The aims and conditions set in every programme are carefully chosen and implemented through an extensive corporation concerning all the interested parties. They recommend advanced development models for the economic and social renewal of the areas interested with the help of funding projects

to improve living conditions, for example by renovating buildings and creating green areas, to create jobs, for example in environment, culture, and services to the population, to integrate the less-favored social classes into the education and training systems, to develop environmentally friendly public transport systems, to create effective energy management systems and make greater use of renewable energy and finally to use information technologies. (European Commission 2012.)

The European Commission had ratified a financial and societal Urban II Community Initiative development programme for Komotini for the period 2000-2006. Komotini is a city located in the North-Eastern municipality of Komotini region. The area is one of the poorest areas in the European Union with a ranking of 46 in income per capital. Its population consists of a significant Turkish minority and a community of Roma people.

Through the years the negative development of the area had a bad effect on the residents. (European Commission 2012.)

It can be noted that there are a lot of similarities when comparing Peltosaari in Finland with Komotini in Greece. Peltosaari and Komotini are poor areas with poor population and minority groups. They face a reputation of a stigmatized image and the social problems in both are flourishing. The areas are in need of building renovations and community development. Both are excluded areas. Peltosaari and Komotini are financed by project to create community development and inclusive places and to fight social exclusion.

2.5.2 “Golding Homes” in Maidstone, Kent, UK

Golding Homes is Maidstone's largest social property-owner in the Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling Boroughs. Golding Homes is a non-profit organization. Golding Homes have five principles which are

Open, costumer focused creative, performance driven and positive.
(Golding Homes 2012.)

They have an “Equality and diversity policy for 2011-2013” that states

Our mission is to provide affordable homes in communities where people want to live. Our vision is to provide good quality of service and make sure they are delivered in the way that people want, i.e. right the first time. Our values are to be customer-focused, performance driven, creative and enabling, open and positive. None of this can be achieved without ensuring that our policies, strategies and performance reflect the diverse needs of our customers and everyone at Golding Homes. The well-being and cohesion of our local community and workforce is important to us.
(Golding Homes 2012.)

By visiting the web site of the Golding Homes it can be noted that there are variety of social services that can be offered to their residents and the variety of booklets available for the public. For an example, a whole section on their web pages describes the dealing

with the phenomenon of anti-social behavior with a sociological approach for the advantage of their service users.

Nowadays Peltosaari project is conducting relationships with the Golden Homes in an effort to gain the knowledge of now-how and to use it, if possible, in the Peltosaari area with the help of the Housing Clinic. Recommendations can be provided to the authorities of Peltosaari project. It seems that a lot of achievements in the Golding Homes can be easily implemented in the policies and programmes of Peltosaari project. Strong recommendation can be made for the anti-social behavior policy to be adapted.

3 CONCEPTUAL-THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

In chapter 3 key words such as community development, social development, social exclusion and excluded community have been defined. The theory of dimensions of social exclusion according to Percy-Smith has been described.

3.1 Defining development

According to Thudipara (2007, 40) as stated in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1960, 1) the term “community development” is a procedure according to which the attempts of people and government authorities are joint to develop the economic, social and cultural situations of populations, to incorporate these communities into the life of the nation and to allow them to add to nationwide growth. Thudipara states that the elements of an urban community development programme are the people themselves and their problems, the government and the voluntary resources. (Thudipara 2007, 40.)

Thudipara (2007, 40-41) mentions that according to Clinard (1966, 126) community development accepts the existence of people`s imagination in different ways which can be advanced to transform the surroundings. In order for the above to be accomplished synchronization of city facilities, neighborhoods needs and problems should come across each other. (Thudipara 2007, 40-41.) According to Sanders (1958, 406)

Thudipara (2007, 41) reveals that

Community development as a process focuses on changes in social relations and involves encouraging people to make their own decisions concerning matters of common interest (Thudipara 2007, 41).

Perkiö (2009, 23) mentions that social development can be well-defined as a consequence of the communal procedures improving welfare in the settings of party-political economy and party-political ecology. Perkiö reviews James Midgley's (1995, see Hall & Midgley 2004, xiv) definition of social development as

A process of planned social change designed to improve the welfare of the population as a whole in conjunction with economic development. (Perkiö 2009, 23.)

3.2 Defining social exclusion

Percy-Smith (2000, 3) states that according to the Commission of the European Communities (1993, 1) social exclusion refers to the various and shifting causes having as consequences individuals to be excluded from the usual interactions, performs and rights of the present society. Social exclusion also refers to insufficient rights in accommodation facilities, education abilities, healthiness and access to facilities and services. Especially in metropolitan and countryside regions social exclusion touches persons and groups, mainly, those who are in certain ways vulnerable to discrimination or isolation. Social exclusion also highlights the faintness in the societal substructure and the possibility of permitting a dualistic society to develop by defaulting. The Commission considers that a philosophical recognition of social exclusion must be forbidden, and that all community inhabitants have a right to the admiration of social dignity. (Percy-Smith 2000, 3.)

Percy-Smith (2000, 7-8) states that in the first annual report on poverty and social exclusion from the Department of Social Security (1999: 24-6), the crucial structures of poverty and social exclusion are acknowledged as:

lack of opportunities to work, lack of opportunities to obtain education and skills, childhood deficiency, disrupted families, barriers to older people living active, fulfilling and healthy lives, inequalities in health, poor housing, poor neighborhoods, fear of crime and disadvantaged groups (Percy-Smith 2000, 7-8).

According to Percy-Smith (2000, 4) Burchardt et al. (1999, 230) prefer a more narrowed definition of the concept social exclusion as follows: In the society a person that lives and functions in a specific geographically area and at the same time refuses to take part in the societal activities of the specific area is considered to be social excluded from that society. (Percy-Smith 2000, 4.)

3.3 Dimensions of social exclusion (Theory Percy-Smith)

According to table 1, the theory of Percy-Smith (2000, 9) describes that the dimensions which indicate social exclusion are seven. These dimensions are the social dimension, the political, the neighborhood, the economic, the individual, the spatial and the group dimension.

Following is a description of what kinds of indicators basically characterize each dimensions of social exclusion according to the theory of Percy-Smith. Of special importance is the economic dimension. Percy-Smith (2000, 8) indicates that economic factors play a vital role in identifying social exclusion. Even though they are not the only ones, their importance is significant. Besides main indicators such as poverty and deficiency of tolerable income, basic characteristic is unemployment, the length of unemployment the kind of unemployment situations families' face. For example how long the members of a family are being unemployment and if members with working capabilities are not employed.

Other crucial factors are changes affecting the labour market such as casualization, decreasing job security and fragile attachment to the labour market. (Percy-Smith 2000, 8.)

Percy-Smith (2000, 9) states that the social dimension can include social factors that affect the family in relation to economic factors mentioned in the above paragraph. A lot of issues involving housing are relevant to the social dimension. This dimension comprehends issues such as the ruin of families, a significant amount of young pregnancies, homelessness, criminality and alienated youth. (Percy-Smith 2000, 9.)

The theory of Percy-Smith considers the political dimension of social exclusion as vital in decision making policies. Percy-Smith (2000, 9-10) describes as political factors the capability to participate or to have an impact on political decision matters. For example, the right for voting and how it is used from the point of view of the citizens. If they actuate their right to vote or they declare absent from the political decision making reality. Participatory community involment in local unions is considered to be another form of political action with decision makings that will affect the local community. Denial of participation contributes to "disempowerment." (Percy-Smith 2000, 9-10.)

Social exclusion taking into consideration neighborhood factors is connect to social as well to spatial elements. The neighborhood dimension is linked to access of services in excluded regions, to housing and to community participation. Neighborhood indicators of social exclusion can be an ecological deprivation, a decomposing housing stock and the closer of resident services. (Percy-Smith 2000, 10.)

Percy-Smith (2000, 10) acknowledges that aggregate levels of physical and psychological disturbed wellbeing, little self-confidence and old dated abilities and expertise are forms in which the individual dimension appears. The economic, social, political and individual dimensions influence in many ways the individual prospective of social exclusion. (Percy-Smith 2000, 10.)

The spatial is a very important dimension since it appears in urban areas or countryside regions characterized from their own identity as excluded peripheries in which minority and excluded groups seem to find shelter and act. The reputation of these areas have declined and bad reputation makes these minority groups to show more with only alternative reality to progress to more and more disadvantaged areas. (Percy-Smith 2000, 10.)

It is certain that two types of groups are usually effective from the above mentioned dimensions of social exclusion. First group of people is the one that its members for certain individual reasons deny the morals, ethics and ways of life of the societies in questioned. The differences can appear stronger with the adding of elements such as ethnic groups, culture background, language and faith. The second group appears to concentrate on people who are vulnerable because of negative or disadvantage circumstances of their lives. Such groups can be senior people, ethnic minority groups and people depending on social benefits to live. (Percy-Smith 2000, 11.)

Percy-Smith originates a table of the dimensions of social exclusion. Each dimension in its turn integrates important aspects named as “indicators”. These indicators are interpreted as characteristics that shape specific groups of people that are excluded or nearly excluded from specific areas and activities that characterize an included society.

Table 1: Shows the dimensions of social exclusion, significant indicators that characterize them and an example of groups that can be affected by these indicators (Percy-Smith 2000, 9).

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Economic	Long-term unemployment Casualization and job insecurity Workless households Income poverty
Social	Breakdown of traditional households Unwanted teenage pregnancies Homelessness Crime Disaffected youth
Political	Disempowerment Lack of political rights Low registration of voters Low voter turnout Low levels of community activity Alienation/lack of confidence in political processes Social disturbance/disorder
Neighbourhood	Environmental degradation Decaying housing stock Withdrawal of local services Collapse of support networks
Individual	Mental and physical ill health Educational underachievement/low skills Loss of self-esteem/confidence
Spatial	Concentration/marginalization of vulnerable groups
Group	Concentration of above characteristics in particular groups: elderly, disabled, ethnic minorities

3.4 Excluded communities

Taket et al. (2009, 20) state that according to Watt and Jacobs (2000) when a significant high number of excluded persons live in the same communal area the whole area can be stigmatized. In communities where some members are stigmatized for their anti-social behavior in connection with social problems in the area, it has been noticed that high criminality figures, lack of jobs, prohibited drug consumption, teenage pregnancies can lead to the stigmatization of the whole population in the area as a such unmoral behavior class. (Taket et al. 2009, 20.)

Taket et al. (2009, 21) acknowledge that according to Buck (2001) more and more persons and families try to move to more societal acceptable areas when they are living

in stigmatized areas. Also there are individuals or families that prefer to live in stigmatized areas taking into consideration financial benefits such as cheap rents or cheap property values.

Taket et al. state (2009, 21) that populations that are at the danger of exclusion are usually left out of the policy making decisions and that according to Narayan and Pritchett (1999) that communities that can afford a high level of social capital have more possibilities to receive more efficiency and capable services (Taket et al. 2009, 21).

4 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF PELTOSAARI PROJECT

Chapter 4 refers to social aspects Peltosaari project initiates through its functionality and ability to approach social issues that are obvious in Peltosaari area. These social aspects are considered based on the studies and the media.

4.1 The roles of Peltosaari project

According to a study called “The Innovative Concept of Housing Renewal: Emphasis on people in major renewal process of old neighbourhoods. Case: Peltosaari, Riihimäki, Finland” conducted by Mrs. Väkevä-Harjula Irene as Project manager of Peltosaari project

The strategy of Peltosaari-project comprises three main issues: 1. physical renewal which includes building and city planning, 2. emphasis on people during the renewal process and 3. ecological and energy-efficient renewal. In addition to the physical renewal the socioeconomic situation requires radical actions to prevent further social segregation. This is an important prerequisite for developing Peltosaari towards a modern and attractive housing area. (Väkevä-Harjula 2010, 1.)

As Väkevä-Harjula (2010, 2.) states in her study:

Late 2010 Peltosaari Portfolio had two developing projects funded by ARA - The Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland and one by Tekes - The Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation. Project Manager started her work on 1st of June 2010. While writing this paper Peltosaari portfolio has expanded to a total of five different projects including the development of a comprehensive strategy for a housing renewal as well as a large-scale research projects by VTT - Technical Research Center of Finland and Helsinki University. (Väkevä-Harjula 2010, 2.)

The following Figure 5 indicates the roles the investors and the partners of Peltosaari project have played in the following two years in order to achieve neighborhood community development based on the human being. The green, orange, yellow and white sections indicate financing sectors, their investors and the amounts of their finances. The pink section shows the two latest research that have been conducted in Peltosaari area, one by the University of Helsinki and one by VTT.

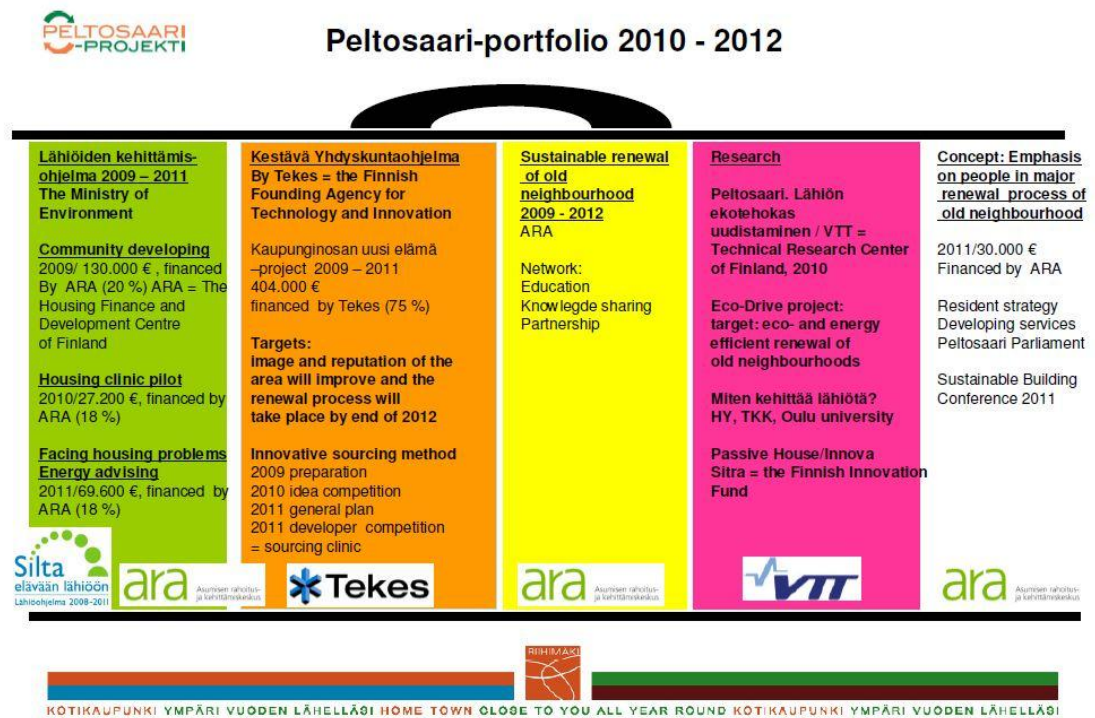


Figure 5: Peltosaari-portfolio 2009 – 2011. The Innovative Concept of Housing Renewal. (Väkevä-Harjula 2010, 2.)

Väkevä-Harjula (2010, 2-3) declares that all-purpose aims of the Peltosaari project towards community development are:

improving the image and the reputation of Peltosaari, developing a safe and attractive area for young professionals, families, students and senior citizens. Creating better public-private services and outdoor facilities including parks, playgrounds and venues for events. Encouraging active inhabitants in taking care of their houses and environment and creating the working social network, a house on the cliff. (Väkevä-Harjula 2010, 2-3.)

In chapter two Väkevä-Harjula (2010, 2-3) emphasizes the importance of the participation of the local residents in the formation and execution of the Peltosaari project in the early stages. This participation was mobilized by local initiation, generating corporations and inclusion of social work. Further the involvement of inhabitants of Peltosaari in the “decision-making” gives the opportunity for the gathering of information regarding the “well-being” of the people that are activated in Peltosaari area. Improvement of social cohesion can be achieved with the help of

participation tactics and collective actions. By these means the necessity for social services in the area will arise. (Väkevä-Harjula 2010, 2-3.)

In the conclusion of the study Väkevä-Harjula (2010, 5) strongly states that the Peltosaari project

will build on research, knowledge management, partnerships, resident activation, sharing of tacit knowledge and experiences from housing clinic pilot and Peltosaari Parliament (Väkevä-Harjula 2010, 5).

4.2 Housing Clinic

Also the Housing Clinic is a pilot project-organization, realized for the first time in the Finnish history of community building research in connection to community development. The housing Clinic is an organization that has no historical background. It is a pilot program, with no similar in Finland, designed to serve Peltosaari project on issues relevant to human resources and to social and welfare needs through community and social work development channels. According to a news article printed by YLE Häme (The Finnish Broadcasting Company Ltd) “Housing Clinic starts in Peltosaari, Riihimäki” objectives of the Housing Clinic are to transport services nearer to the service users and the improvement of service providers.

The residents of Peltosaari are guided, among other things, to act responsible for housing issues, to classify problem situations so that actions can be taken in order to improve the safety of everyday life. Residents are also stimulated to participate in physical actions under the sports department of “Health Physical Activity” that is hosted by the Housing Clinic under Peltosaari project. Also the Clinic officials have initiated collaboration with Peltosaari School and youth work through the “Peltosaari Youth club”. In addition duty of the Housing Clinic is to establish networks and to discover provision needs of the inhabitants of the Peltosaari project. (YLE Häme, 2010.)

Developing strategy

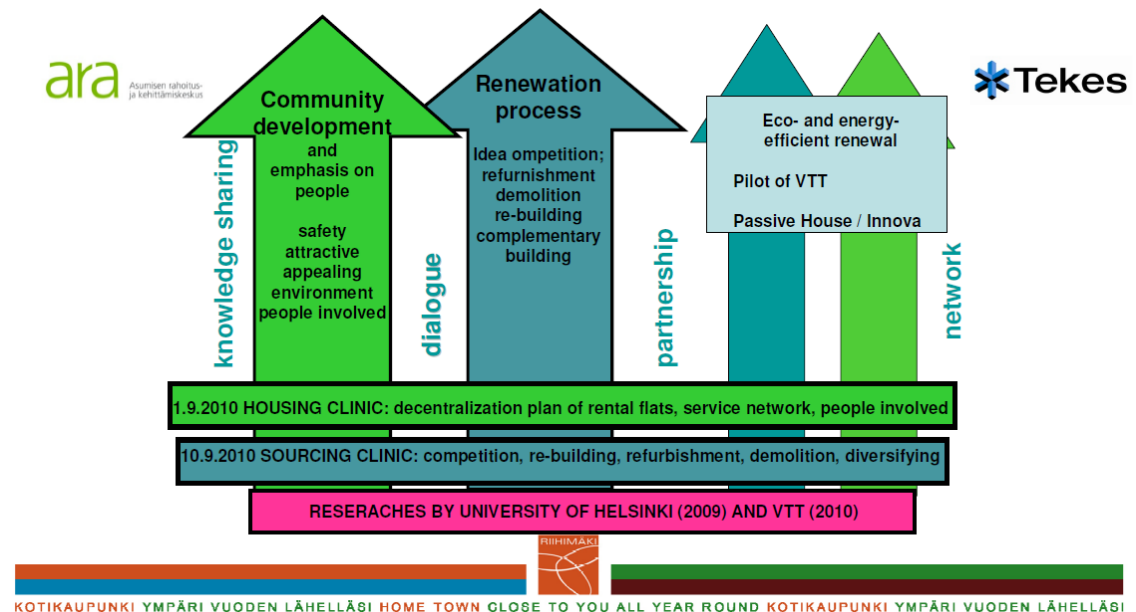


Figure 6: Role of Housing Clinic. Eco-efficient renewal of old neighborhoods: Case Riihimäki, Peltosaari. (Väkevä-Harjula 2010, 8.)

Green color: Roles, functions and networks of the Housing Clinic inside the Peltosaari project.

The above Figure 6 explains the development strategy of Peltosaari project in connection to its partners and networks. With the help of discussion and information involvement, the human capacity is emphasized in renewal processes. The restoration procedure aims at the creation of a safe and pleasant environment with the help of human participation in the form of community development. Basic task of the Housing Clinic is the community development restoration procedures through a service network and local participation.

A web page of the municipality of Riihimäki reveals that the Housing Clinic assists in simplifying accommodation and living issues that concern residents of Peltosaari area. From there the service users are directed to the correct department for problem solving. (Riihimäki, 2012.)

4.3 Peltosaari Parliament

The Peltosaari Parliament was launched after a year of life of Peltosaari project. The authorities in charge of the Housing Clinic and some active residents decided to create a non-profit organization, the Peltosaari Parliament. Aims of the Peltosaari Parliament are to encourage residents of the Peltosaari area to participate in the activities of the organization in an effort to put pressure and to influence in any ways the decision makings regarding the Peltosaari area. Also the Peltosaari Parliament has established a voice in front of the press and the media through its representatives. The Peltosaari Parliament as a guest stationed in the Housing Clinic cooperates and participates in activities launched by the Housing Clinic. Participation and empowerment are basic methods that the Peltosaari Parliament implements in its social work.

Figure 7 shows the basic targets of Peltosaari Project and groups that are activated or stationed in the Peltosaari Parliament. Also the cooperating groups with the Peltosaari parliament are shown. Figure 4 shows that active participation of the residents of Peltosaari in the activities of the Peltosaari Parliament is high.



Figure 7: Active groups in the Peltosaari Parliament (Väkevä-Harjula 2011, 15).

5 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Chapter 5 describes the research part of the thesis work. The research questions, the research population and the target groups are analyzed. Special emphasis in this chapter is on research methods and research tools that have been used in the research procedures. Also the procedure of data analysis is presented.

5.1 Research questions

This thesis aims to describe the social aspects of Peltosaari project. In addition, it aims to clarify “What kind of social aspects the Peltosaari Project generates”. Special emphasis is on matters of exclusion realities that characterize the Peltosaari area and its residents. Also the research aims at finding ways, policies and solutions that will change the exclusion reality towards a beneficiary inclusion strategy for the area and its inhabitants with the help of the Peltosaari Project. “What actions has the Peltosaari Project taken until now to promote inclusion tactics?” and “What still is needed to be done towards a policy which aims at inclusion?”

5.2 Research population

Davies (2003, 11) states that

a project is further possible to be successful if it gets support from a large number of residents. Also, a project promoting or supported by the mainstream of the community is more expected to obtain support from exterior organizations, such as funding agencies. (Davies (2003, 11.)

Two focus groups that have been aimed at and used during the research period for the purpose of data gathering have been the residents of Peltosaari area and the investors, the executive project managers and directors in charge of the Peltosaari project. The implementation of the Peltosaari project in the near future will shape their

environmental surroundings and environmental culture and will influence their personal and societal lifestyle in many different ways.

Taking into account the clients or service users of the Housing Clinic, research was executed for the purposes of discovering the services and needs that they expect to receive through the Housing Clinic and also the hopes for a better functioning of the Housing Clinic. According to Hafford- Letchfield (2008, 58) service users not only transport knowledge but can help experts describe the roles and provision needed to be responsible and receptive to variation and development. Chances for service users and careers to take on leadership roles are likewise dependent on the principles of the organizations providing services. (Hafford- Letchfield (2008, 58.)

Figure 8 the research population that my research covered. My research target groups in sizes of importance are shown also in Figure 8. The larger the shape of the group is the more important the group was to the research.



Figure 8: Research population-Target groups.

5.3 Target groups-Focus groups

The building, community and eco-system development nature of Peltosaari project should benefit the owners of the building development property and the residents of the specific area. The entire research procedure was based on four beneficiary groups of people. The focus on these four groups was entirely satisfactory in terms of data collection and data analyzing in the efforts for the research procedure to produce results.

These groups shall be the heart and soul of the future of the project in the realization of the implementation stage. Also, their responses towards the effectiveness and functionality of the societal community development programme, will judge if the purposes and targets have been reached or have failed. They shall be the ones that will feel if their quality of life has improved by the continuous implementation of the social planning procedure and if surplus values have been produced.

Based on the importance of the above paragraph, the representatives of the four focus groups that were chosen to participate in the data collecting procedure of this research were filtered beforehand. The filtration was important in an effort for realization reasons.

The candidates to represent their own group of people ought to stand up to specific standards. The ability to understand the danger factors involving changes in the “status quo” powers of the Peltosaari area amount the Peltosaari community itself and in connection with the powers of the other areas of Riihimäki district was a specific requirement.

Another requirement was the individual's quality of knowledge regarding the geographic, historical, cultural, economic and societal background of the Peltosaari area. Other requirements were the candidates' possession of basic theoretical knowledge of the Peltosaari project and basic understanding of social terminology (community development, inclusion, exclusion, social justice etc.). An important requirement was the individual's volition to be open-minded in criticizing the Peltosaari project in

positive and negative ways. Also special emphasis had been given to the candidate's positive attitude towards purposing alternative ways and solutions.

The most important basic criteria for the approval of candidates as representatives were three. First criteria were permanent residents of Peltosaari area, who have being living there for a long period of time. Second criteria was the requirement that the candidates could be preferable elderly people or either residents on rent terms that have being living also there for a long period of time. Third criteria was either to members of organizations that have being active in the area for a long period of time or either investors in the Peltosaari project or either administrative personnel in charge of the Peltosaari project.

Based on the above mentioned requirements and criteria eight individuals were chosen to participate in the interviews during the research procedure. Four individuals were permanent resident of Peltosaari area living in their own houses and four were administrative or executive managers in charge of Peltosaari project.

Rental residents of the Peltosaari area refused to participate in the interview procedure. Also the organizations that financed the project refused to participate in the interviews. Only representatives of the municipality of Riihimäki participated in the interview procedures.

The investors of Peltosaari project were pleased to participate as an observer or an active guest in their meetings and public presentations regarding the progress of the Peltosaari project. Rental residents participated in forms of discussions or conversations during the researcher's active participatory or participatory observation in open outside areas such as neighbourhoods, squares, streets, public events, public meetings and the Riihimäki railway station.

The permanent residents of Peltosaari with ownership or rental status were included in the first and most important focus group involved in the research for the purpose of data collecting. The second group consisted of the people that were in charge of the Peltosaari project and carried the responsibilities during the planning and

implementation phases such as project, administrative and executive managers in connection with the expertise of general secretaries.

Third important focus group represented the financial invest oral public organizations or private enterprises that have financed the entire Peltosaari project. The last focus group involved the elective consul and representative members of the non-profit organization “Peltosaari Parliament”

5.4 Type of research

Qualitative: approaches to collecting information that reflects feeling, meaning and understanding (Learning Evaluation and Planning 2001, 19).

Basic task was data collecting from the residents of Peltosaari regarding their residential stories, opinions, thoughts, reactions, fears, hopes, wonders, doubts, suggestions and insecurity in connection to the Peltosaari project.

Research methods that have been used were qualitative research and participatory observation. With the help of participatory observation and individual or ethnographic interviews as qualitative research methods, research was conducted involving permanent residents of the area of Peltosaari and executive managers responsible for different departments of the Peltosaari project. Other partners in the research were the investors, the media, stakeholders, service users, directors, organizations, unions and sponsors (see Figure 8). The contents of the individual interviews were decided during my placement period in cooperation with the project manager of Peltosaari project.

Through official meetings or face to face discussions (small talking) the long-term clients or service users of the Housing Clinic played an active role during my research.



Figure 9: Research methods applied during the research procedure.

5.5 Interviews

According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2009, 271)

qualitative interviews can contain detailed descriptions of the subject's life situations, their experiences and actions (Brinkmann & Kvale 2009, 271).

Qualitative research method has been used in the form of personal individual interviews. Four interviews were conducted involving four permanent residents of the area of Peltosaari (also members of the Peltosaari Parliament), one in English and three in Finnish with the help of interpreters and four interviews with four executive managers or directors responsible for different departments of the Peltosaari project all in English.

In order to achieve better results I used the evaluation BIKVA model during the interviewing process (details of BIKVA model in chapter 5.7). The snowball method was implemented during the interviews in an effort to produce more realistic results on the outcome. Using the snowball method during the interviews had a positive effect on the outcome. The duration of the interviews was between thirty-five minutes the shortest and up to three hours for the longest interview.

All interviews have been audio recorded. Because of the fact that the interpreters failed to provide detailed translation, the three interviews that were conducted in Finnish have been in detail translated to English.

As special characteristics of the interviews it can be mentioned that four interviews were conducted in the target language English and three in Finnish with the help of interpreters. Also the fact that there was an equal amount of representatives from both sides, four from the Peltosaari Parliament and four from the administrative body of the Peltosaari project. Five women and three men were represented with variety in ages, backgrounds, cultural and educational levels.

The interviews during the research stage were documented by voice-recording devices and later on were transformed into the form of documents.

Ethnographic interviews were used during the research procedure in the form of “small talk” with the help of the snowball method during public meetings and gatherings of local inhabitants, unofficial gathering of executive managers or staff members of Peltosaari project and the Housing Clinic.

According to Flick (2009, 169) Spradley (1979, 58-59) states that

it is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants. Exclusive use of these new ethnographic elements will make interviews become like a formal interrogation. (Flick 2009, 169.)

Figure 10 shows the types of interviews that were used during my research procedures. Figure 10 also shows that semi-structured questions and the snowball method were used in the qualitative interviews and that free style questions and the snowball method were used during the ethnographic interviews.

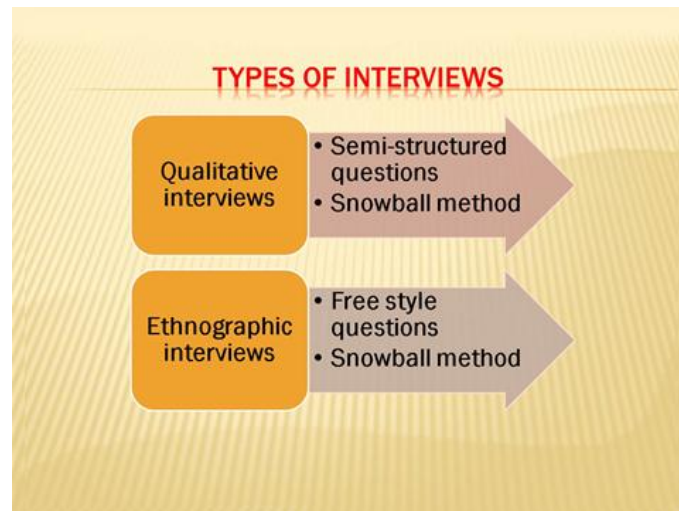


Figure 10: Types of interviews and research tools.

5.6 Participatory observation

According to Flick (2009, 226) a definition given by Dentin (1989, 157-158) states that participant observation is a field strategy that simultaneously combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents and informants, direct participation and observation and introspection (Flick 2009, 226).

Participatory observation has been conducted during two placement periods at the Housing Clinic in consideration to the Peltosaari project as a whole.

Risk factor that influenced the analyzing of the data and the results was my Finnish language barrier that often limited the quantitative capacity, ability and possibility of interviewing the residents of Peltosaari and the service users of the Housing Clinic.

Participatory observation was used in gathering information during sessions of the Peltosaari Parliament, official and evaluation sessions of the Peltosaari project, public meetings and gatherings of local inhabitants. Especially the participation in sessions of the Peltosaari Parliament resulted in gathering behavior information. This behavior information was used as a guide in the interview process when the interviewee was a resident of Peltosaari.

5.7 The BIKVA Model (User Participation in Quality Assessment)

The BIKVA model (Brugerinddragelse i KVALitetsvurdering) was established in Denmark and it is an assessment and value improvement technique. It is created to collect information regarding the service user opinions, because the service users are in possession of vital information for a better developing of the communal sector services. (Palmenia 2012.)

BIKVA is participating and client-orientated. The method it uses is interviewing.

The evaluation process starts from the clients, then moves to the front-line staff (employees in direct contact with the clients) and finally ends to managers and politicians (Palmenia 2012).

As seen in figure 11 I used the BIKVA method. First residents of Peltosaari were interviewed and the data that was collected through these interviews were analyzed in ways to form questions that were used in the second wave where administrative and manager officials of the Peltosaari project were interviewed. It proved to be a good evaluation tool.



Figure 11: Use of the BIKVA model in my research.

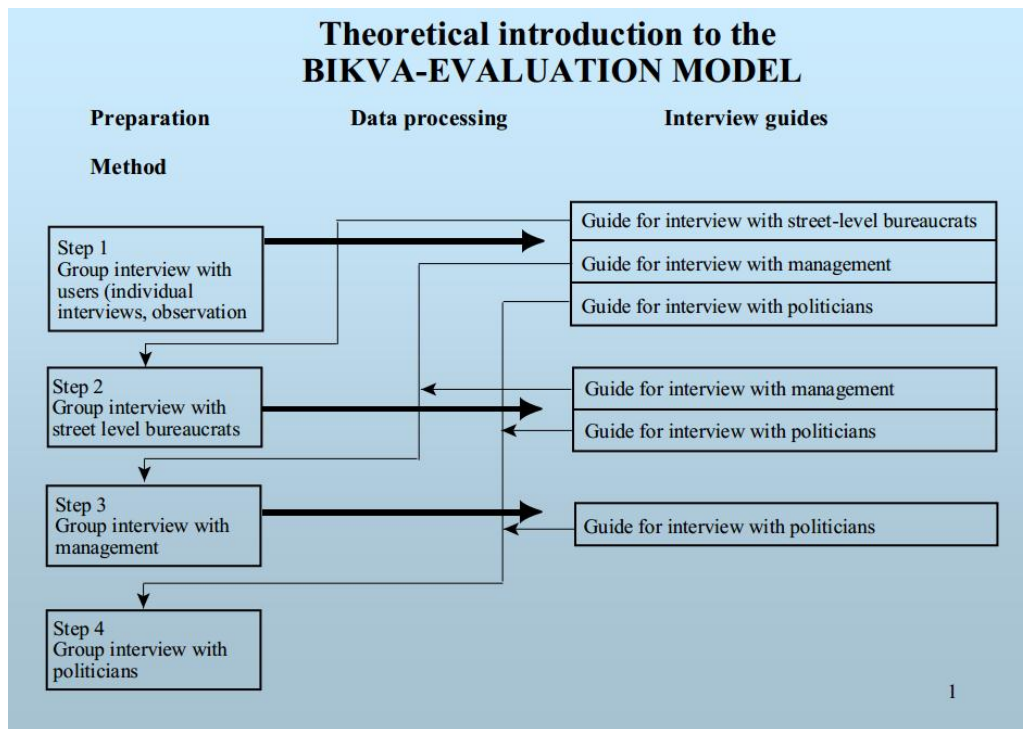


Figure 12: Theoretical introduction to the BIKVA-EVALUATION MODEL. (Stakes 2012).

5.8 Challenges during the research

The challenges that I faced during the research procedure were: difficulties in finding permanent residents of Peltosaari willing to participate in an interview in English. My language barrier limited the quantitative capacity, ability and possibility of interviewing the residents of Peltosaari and the service users of the Housing Clinic in more productive ways.

The fact that I was a foreigner and not a native Finnish person trying to conduct interviews raised suspicions among some of the residents of Peltosaari area. They could not understand why a foreigner was sent to interview them in English and not a native Finnish speaking person.

The residents seemed to be tired of giving interviews. Several interviews in the near past have been done for projects, but implementations of them have not been witnessed.

When residents of Peltosaari area were asked to be interviewed by me, their first reaction was “not again!”

The use of interpreters seemed to leave a lot of gaps in the interviews creating misunderstanding or black spots. The snowball method during the interviews sometimes was ineffective when the conversation was lead towards topics not relative to the purpose of the interviews.

Hearing the interviews from the voice recorder afterwards I noticed that during the process of the interviews I accounted difficulties. These difficulties were based on my lack of experiences in conducting interviews and my lack of confidence. The use of questions that seemed to be unclear for the interviewee, questions that did not bring results, questions with content that was difficult for the interviewee to follow and off target questions added to my inexperience. The snowball method in interviewing was proved useful if used correctly, otherwise created chaos and guided the interview to wrong directions.

An enormous challenge was the chaotic and confusing realization of the real nature of the Peltosaari project that led a lot of questions answered and other answers provided with a lot of unclearness and doubts. Another challenge was proved to be the tight schedules of the executive directors in charge of the Peltosaari project and the Housing Clinic.

The realization that even if the questions were clear and relative to the interviewer, they seem not to be always of special interest or clear to the interviewee. Elements and facts that can have a certain meaning and influence on the interviewer can have a total different approach and meaning from the interviewee point of view. So it was very important to synchronize the frequencies of communicating on the same wave of understanding with the interviewee in order to create a common ground on which to interact. This realization from the point of view of the researcher became an obstacle that had to be passed.

5.9 Analysis of the data

After the data was collected and transcription into documents was carried out, the findings of the research through the individual interviews were grouped deepening on the social elements they represent. Further narrowing of the data created new groups when the social dimension of exclusion was taken into consideration.

According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2009, 203)

content analysis is a technique for a systematic quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Brinkmann & Kvale 2009, 203).

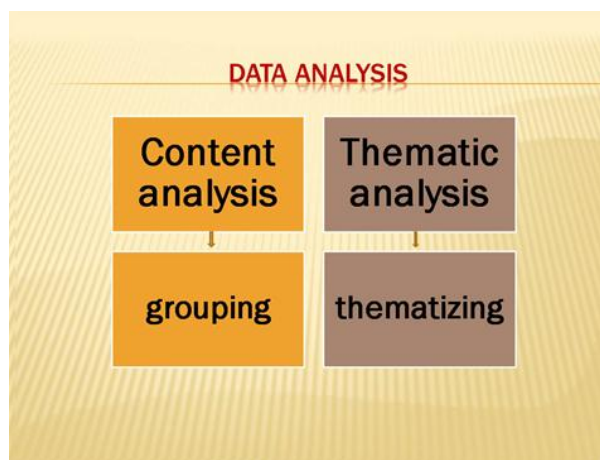


Figure 13: Used methods of analysis in my research.

Two kinds of data analysis methods I used, the content analysis and the thematic analysis. First I used content analysis and grouped my findings depending on the issue they represented. Then I used thematic analysis to thematized the existing already groups depending on the social issues the groups represented. Then the results of the thematizing procedure were grouped again to fit table 1 of the theory of dimensions of social exclusion by Percy-Smith. In this way tables 2A and 2B were created. So tables 2A and 2B shows all the important findings from the personal individual interviews.

The findings from the ethnographic interviews, the active participation and the participatory observation revealed suggestions from residents and recommendations from officials for an inclusive policy in Peltosaari area. These suggestions and recommendations were categorized into groups depending on the social field of interest

they represented. I used content analysis for the grouping of suggestions and recommendations. The results can be seen on table 3.

6 FINDINGS

The findings mentioned in chapters 6.1 and 6.2 are based on the data analysis basically from the individual interviews. The findings mentioned in chapters 6.3 until 6.7 are based on the data analysis basically from ethnographic interviewing, active participations and participatory observations.



Figure 14: Types of findings depending on the research methods used.

6.1 Dimensions of social exclusion

After grouping the data collected through the personal interviews, the researcher thematized further the findings according to the table 1 of dimensions of social exclusion according to the theory of which has been analyzed in chapter 3.3. The results were tables 2A and 2B. According to these tables, the findings of the research show clearly that there are social exclusion elements in the Peltosaari area by the theory of Percy-Smith.

A demonstration can show how the tables 2A and 2B work. A finding after analyzing the data from the research shows that in Peltosaari there is an amount of unemployment between the residents of the Peltosaari area. In table 2A we it can be noticed that this unemployment factor fits in the dimension theory of Percy-Smith as part of economic dimensions (see chapter 3.3) that show that from the moment there is unemployment in Peltosaari, social exclusion exists in the area.

The table 2A shows also the social groups that were discovered by the research to be more affected by unemployment. In the above case minority groups and young people were affected by unemployment. Therefore, according to Percy-Smith, social exclusion exists in Peltosaari area, because among two social groups, minority groups and young people that live in the area, there are high levels of unemployment. The same method of interpreting also applies for table 2B.

So all the elements and all the groups in tables 2A and 2B are findings from this research and each element and group shows to which extension there is social exclusion in the Peltosaari area taking into consideration social factors that were reviled through the analyzing of the data collected through this research.

DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Table 2A: Dimensions of social exclusion in the Peltosaari area.

SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	POLITICAL	GROUPS
high crime rates	unemployment	lack of political trust	minority groups young people
lack of social services	lack of housing demands	lack of housing demands	young people at risk
high benefit dependency	poor local economy	poor policies	people with disabilities
anti-social behavior	high benefit dependency	high benefit dependency	criminals
youth nuisance	lack of investments	poverty	immigrants
family problems	poverty	lack of consultation	students
poverty			ex-prisoners convicts
poor social networks			elderly people

Table 2B: Dimensions of social exclusion in the Peltosaari area.

NEIGHBORHOOD	INDIVIDUAL	SPATIAL	GROUPS
poor public facilities	psychological isolation	marginalization of vulnerable groups	minority groups
stigma of local area		concentration of vulnerable groups	young people at risk
poor local reputation		diversity	people with disabilities
physical isolation			elderly people
poor public facilities			immigrants
poor custom care			students
badly designed			ex-prisoners convicts
poor maintenance of public areas			criminals

6.2 Suggestions from residents and recommendations from officials for an inclusive policy in Peltosaari

Findings of the research indicate suggestions from residents' point of view on what actions the Peltosaari project should take in an effort to create a Peltosaari with more inclusion reality. The findings also reveal from the Peltosaari project in which ways the Peltosaari project will better achieve its objectives to create an attractive and inclusive Peltosaari. These suggestions from residents and recommendations of officials can be seen in the table 3.

Table 3: Suggestions from residents and recommendations from officials for an inclusive policy in Peltosaari.

SUGGESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OFFICIALS FOR AN INCLUSIVE POLICY IN PELTOSAARI
creation of public services for people with disabilities
through building development to increase local public and private investments
local measures to decrease unemployment and benefit dependency
creation of better public facilities
local measures to tackle high crime, anti-social behavior and youth nuisance
improvement of customer services for efficiency customer care
better management of public and communal areas and facilities
promoting diversity
tackling poverty
improving the physical environment
increasing opportunities for the creation and strengthening of social networks
control of social behavior of alcoholic abusers
improving the lives of disadvantaged people
more efficiency designed buildings and neighborhoods

6.3 Roles of the Housing Clinic in the local community

According to Clark (2000, 18)

Community development is a specialized function, it is executed by hired, specifically qualified employees who are beneath some form of prescribed duty, to their employer, which is peripheral to the community, and/or to the community itself, for the supply of a service and is basically, focused on social change (Clark 2000, 18).

The Housing Clinic is a pilot organization for the municipality of Riihimäki. One of the aims of the Peltosaari project is this pilot organization to become an example and prototype for other municipalities in Finland and elsewhere which are dealing with community building development. The above vision regarding the Housing Clinic is the new connection between the Peltosaari project and other similar projects.

A pilot organization under the name “Housing Clinic” was created to serve specific needs of the Peltosaari project in terms of public representation, marketing and interaction with the residents of Peltosaari and Riihimäki. The aims and goals of the Housing Clinic is to serve the human capacity in ways that the people benefit from the services in terms of economical, psychological, cultural, societal and even personal parameters.

A role that the Housing Clinic has on the local community is the channeling through which information regarding the Peltosaari project travels to organizations, groups or individuals of interest and through which feedback is delivered back to the executives of the project plan. The role of the Housing Clinic is to publicize and convince through face to face contact at the Clinic which are the purposes of Peltosaari project and the consequences of its implementation in the local area. These levels of community building development and social development are directed towards a more included Peltosaari in the life of Riihimäki with less social and community problems for the local residents. This role is achieved through the media, meetings and seminars.

Vital role the Housing Clinic plays is to collect feedback. During the planning procedures the Housing Clinic by analyzing the collected data seeks suitable or alternative ways, so the implementation stages with work hand to hand with the services users. In this case service users are the residents of Peltosaari, the investors and their profits.

Today Peltosaari is an area in Riihimäki with a lot of social (high unemployment and crime rate, insecurity and mistrust between the locals and the authorities, high rate of alcohol and drugs abuse, illegal activities performed by excluded groups etc.) and economic problems (investments and property values on low levels). The basic role of

the Housing Clinic is its human dimension. All the other organizations involved in the project are concerned about community building and profit seeking. Instead, the Clinic is seeking ways through the Peltosaari project to accomplish social development and to use right social capital to bring social justice to the area and its inhabitants.

The Housing Clinic also has the duty to inform and alarm the project managers and their partners in the project that if they really want to see a better Peltosaari that Riihimäki can be proud of, the social needs of the residents of Peltosaari should be included in the planning and social services must be delivered to them through the implementation of the project.

The Housing Clinic has succeeded slightly in coexisting with voluntarily partners in the Housing Clinic. A social worker from the social office of the town hall of Riihimäki every Tuesday stations at the Housing Clinic and meets her clients there. A women`s outdoor fitness exercise group meets at the clinic. The group`s starting and finishing point is the clinic. Every second week, a nurse from the public health center of Riihimäki offers her services for the measurements of blood pressure and sugar-levels of the inhabitants of Peltosaari area. A few times local public and private non-profit organizations have had their staff meetings at the Housing Clinic in order to promote publicity status for the Housing Clinic.

The Housing Clinic is involved in the Peltosaari project in micro level (with service users and clients of the Clinic), meso level (with cooperative partners) and macro level (management, investors and communities of Peltosaari and Riihimäki).

6.4 Too early-No use

After analyzing the data that has been obtained through qualitative research, active participation and participatory observation a very interesting finding has emerged, “that people were not interested in visiting the Housing Clinic”. Reasons for this kind of behaviors from the residents of Peltosaari area are based on factors mentioned next.

Too much publicity has been given to the Housing Clinic through media channels and means in ways that now it has negative affects instead of positive results. The inhabitants of Riihimäki have been informed so much and frequently through the local media about the Peltosaari project and the Housing Clinic, that the information they wanted to know is already published and given through the media in one way or another and the project is not anymore fresh news for the public opinion.

The internet sights of the Housing Clinic and the Peltosaari project as a whole are located in the internet pages of the town hall of Riihimäki and are both full of good quality information about the project and the Housing Clinic. Also there is a blog and a separate discussion area plus an area where people can ask questions and get answers from official channels. So, if people find what they want regarding the Housing Clinic and their questions are answered on line, why they should bother to visit the clinic?

The nature of the Finnish person is to be frightened of something “new” that he is not familiar with. It takes him or her time to adjust to the new situation and to except it as a reality. Then when he feels safe, he will take the necessary steps. This statement is made by the researchers working partners at the Housing Clinic

The administrative and executive management took advantage of every opportunity possible to give presentations outside the Housing Clinic about the Peltosaari project and especially the Housing Clinic, but they and their partners-organizations (TEKES, ARA, VTT and the town consul of the city of Riihimäki) were doing one very crucial mistake: they were usually analyzing the project based on economic and technical possibilities and were leaving out the human factor. Ordinary people and especially the inhabitants of the Peltosaari district are not really interested in economics. They really want to know, how the project will improve their living status and if this specific kind of community development in the area will solve any of the social problems the society faces in this area.

The timing to open the Housing Clinic was wrong. It opened too early and is not really helping a lot the research part of the project. The implementation of the project shall start after specific stages (researches, reports and decision making policies) have been accomplished in certain deadlines. If everything goes according to the plan, the

implementation of the programme will start at the beginning of January 2013. The Housing Clinic should be opened six months before the actual deadline, somewhere in the middle of the year 2012, when the residents of the area under constructions will be notified. When the matter becomes resented and the residents will be really interested to find out in which ways their property possessions and personal lives will change by this community development project. That time the inhabitants of the Peltosaari area will start reacting to information, rumors, small talking's, fears and insecurities. That would have been the right moment for the Housing Clinic to have opened its doors. People are only concerned directly about real situations and reactions only when they have an effect on them.

During my placement period at the Housing Clinic came to my attention that the clients of the clinic can be divided into two categories. The first category includes the clients that visit the clinic because of professional reasons. Such clients are leaders or members of local community unions and organizations, members of the city council of the town hall of Riihimäki, parliament members and representatives from other town halls in Finland that have a special interest in the Peltosaari project.

6.5 Seniors: An excluded group

The second category includes the inhabitants of Peltosaari that live and function daily in the surrounding area. Two thirds of elderly people are lonely, especially old people that come to the clinic in an effort to find and to spend some time with other people. These older people enjoy a cup of coffee or tea accompanied by cookies and talk about their personal lives for hours. Somebody immediately understands that these people are not interested in the Peltosaari project, but are here to spend time together and not to be alone. Here we are faced with the social group of old lonely people. They are the victims of the personal, egoistic and selfish modern way of life of western societies which lack morality and have zeroed the meaning, the ethics and morality of the family. Left alone by their children and close relatives or have chosen to be alone, so they will not be a living barrier to the modern life of their children. This social behavior of the western societies creates exclusion and social injustice situations towards the lonely old

people with tremendous psychological and mental effects and side-effects consequences on their lives.

6.6 Promoting community development

The purpose of the working methods that have been applied in all stages of the Peltosaari project is to promote community development work and users' participation involvement work in parallel with the visions of the Housing Clinic and the Peltosaari project in whole.

These working methods are constantly backed up by research planning and research evaluations. At the time this research was conducted, Peltosaari project was based mainly on research work and periodically evaluation procedures. Crucial is the feedback that the project receives back from the field from the Housing Clinic and the locals. So the project is using the social capital available in the area of Peltosaari with coordinating help to serve the public interest in the local area as much as possible through the project.

According to Henderson and Thomas (2005, 3-4) social capital refers at the same time to systems and faith among people, and also to the connection between people and institutions. It is regarded as being extremely important in creating solid communities, opposing social exclusion and providing a vital foundation for long-term economic development. (Henderson and Thomas 2005, 3-4.)

Promoting community development is also obtained by presenting information about the project's role and what it has to offer to the community development of the area. As communication tools for publicity the media, public meetings, surveys, seminars, questionnaires and action based public information sources were used.

Community development is promoted by developing effective relationships with the residents of Peltosaari by rising responsiveness through community involvement, motivation and discussions on face to face level or through peer network systems. Also the fact of using empowerment methods to encourage them to participate in the activities of the Housing Clinic promoted community development.

Adams (2008, 17) states that

empowerment may be well-defined as: the capability of persons, groups and /or communities to take control of their situations, use power and accomplish their own aims, and the procedure by which, independently and cooperatively, they are able to help one selves and others to capitalize on the quality of their lives”.

According to Swanepoel & Beer (2006, 29) every time people are militarized to take part in a project, they are not just there as a piece of the project; they are not existing so their native everyday knowledge can be used. They do not care for the labour work. They are there because it is their democratic right to be there and to choose concerning the project because it influences their tomorrow”. (Swanepoel & Beer 2006, 29.)

Motivation towards community development can be the sharing of facilities or resources through the Housing Clinic with public and private organizations and NGO’s in an effort to increase involvement in the activities of the Clinic in order to attract participation, by utilizing local experiences and knowledge for the benefit of the project. Also motivation towards community development can be the fact of working alongside and cooperating with other agencies that are directly involved by research or financing with the Peltosaari project. The participation process has only been proved to work when empowerment tactics were used in ways of joint participatory meetings with local residents, local officials and representatives of the Peltosaari project and the Housing Clinic.

According to Henderson (2003, 25) consultation can be accomplished through a lot of different ways: by requesting printed or vocal opinions, through seminars, dialogue forums, managing boards, counseling commissions, working groups, descriptive arrangements or partnerships for local interest. (Henderson 2003, 25). Consultation methods mentioned by Henderson are used as a basic working method at the Housing Clinic.

The networking establishment of the Housing Clinic and the Peltosaari project as a whole is enormous and it works sufficiency for publication and interaction with the

general public and the parties in interest basically through the media and the project's internet pages.

According to Gilchrist and Rauf (2006, 2) networking is the procedure by which relations and connections among persons or administrations are established, developed and used for common advantage (Gilchrist and Rauf 2006, 2).

Gilchrist and Rauf (2006, 5) also state that the use of networks and networking is both a manifestation of the principles of community development and are ways by which community development is accomplished.

Care management methods have been use with staff members and also clients. By Coulshed & Orme (2006, 226-227) the procedure of modifying services to individual requirements proposes that care managers need practice abilities such as inquiring, interconnecting, evaluating, tape-recording, counseling and activating resources.

It might also be seen to draw on the values of individualization and respect for persons". (Coulshed & Orme 2006, 226-227.)

6.7 Necessity of the project- Long term reality of Peltosaari

For at least two decades now the Peltosaari area has been considered to be an area with major problems in comparison with the other areas of Riihimäki. It is an area known to the locals with a bad reputation regarding economic, societal, political and cultural factors. Taking into consideration economic factors, the investments in the area from the public sectors and the private sectors are almost or just zero.

In Peltosaari, there is not a private economy flourishing in the area and the rental price figures and property values are on low levels comparing to the rest of Riihimäki. The municipality of Riihimäki owns almost 50% of the building apartments in Peltosaari, which are rented with low rents to people with specific kind of social needs and problems or to students from other areas of Finland that study in Riihimäki in branches of universities of applied sciences (HAMK, LAUREA, HYRIA) or to immigrants.

On a political level, the interest of the political and local authorities to solve the existing environmental and social problems in the Peltosaari area is not high enough due to lack of economic interests in the area.

On a societal level, the Peltosaari area has a lot of social problems that have to be addressed and solved for the benefit of the local community and the Riihimäki area. Unemployment levels are very high and rates of criminal actions are rising all the time to the levels that make the area uncertain, unsecure and dangerous to act and live in.

Violent scenes (regarding public or domestic violence) and anti-social behavior performed by alcohol and drugs abuse users are an everyday reality in the streets and neighborhoods of Peltosaari. The anti-social behavior of these residents has a negative and dangerous influence on the youth of Peltosaari. Especially youth nuisance has become a serious problem in the area. The area is lacking basic social welfare services that are needed to address, control and solve the mentioned social problems.

Primarily groups of people, who are considered by the public eye and the active productive part of the population of Riihimäki as useless, unproductive and fair to be excluded, live in Peltosaari. Such groups are: seniors (especially pensioners, who are not anymore in the production chain), students, foreigners and immigrants, social rehabilitative ex-convicts and prisoners, people with heavy criminal backgrounds or underground foreign mafia, families surviving with social welfare benefits, people with certain personal and social problems (violence, alcohol or drugs abuse).

On a cultural level, the above mentioned points of view create, testify, accept and encourage situations and behaviors of racism, discrimination, exclusion, inequality, marginalization and violations of human rights, which have led to social exclusion and social injustice.

After public pressure, especially from the Finnish media during the past five years the authorities of the municipality of Riihimäki decided to provide solutions to the problems raised in the area of Peltosaari and to transform the area into a safe and

productive part of the life and economy of the Riihimäki district. In order to achieve these goals, Peltosaari project has been created.

The whole philosophy and vision behind the Peltosaari project is as follows: The research and planning of the project will create healthy bases upon which the implementation of the project will be executed.

During the implementation phase of the project, community building development will take place (some buildings will be destroyed and replaced. Others will be repaired or reconstructed). This community building development is necessary in order to shape the building structures and the near public surroundings in external and internal ways with eco-efficient methods. As results the natural environment and the lifestyle of the residents of Peltosaari area will rapidly improve.

This community building will naturally bring community development that will involve a lot of community and social work on a social environment level, which in its turn will create social activities and social networks and services stationed in Peltosaari area. This in turn will try to solve the social collective problems of the inhabitants of Peltosaari through community participation, empowerment, involvement, integration, community resources and human capacity, in order to achieve the right use of social capital, social inclusion and social justice to the area of Peltosaari as a whole and especially to its residents.

Considering the visions of the project and the social and welfare expectations of the inhabitants of Peltosaari, the mission of the project is to find ways, tactics and reasons using the abilities and functions of the Housing Clinic as weapons to enforce the social human element in the planning of the Peltosaari project. It is also to ensure that the human element will be a basic and important part of the implementation of procedures towards social inclusion and social justice.

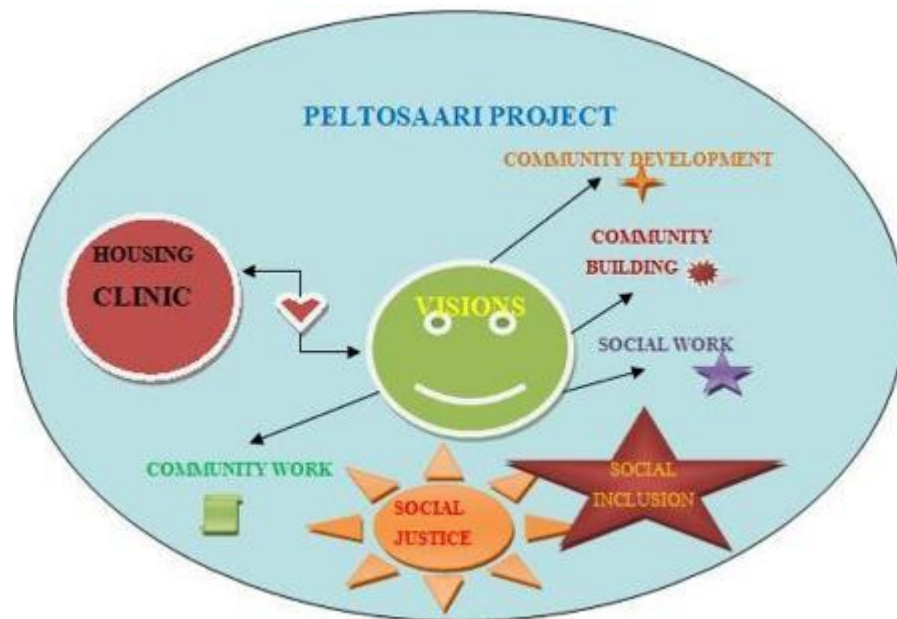


Figure 15: Visions of Peltosaari project seen mainly from the point of view of the authorities of Peltosaari project and secondary from the eyes of the residents of Peltosaari area.

The above mentioned vision regarding the Housing Clinic has been a new connection between the Peltosaari project and other similar projects for example the “Golding Homes” project.

7 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In chapter 7 I describe how my professional development was enriched during my active participation in the Housing Clinic and through my thesis study. Goals that I achieved are been mentioned and my learning experiences are been described.

7.1 Professional development

As a student of university of Applied Sciences in the field of social services, by accomplishing two practical placements, stationed at the Peltosaari project, I gained valued experiences in the fields of development and communications combined with community development and social work.

I had the unique opportunity to participate in research development procedures regarding Peltosaari project. I participated in the stages of planning, implementing, illustrating, promoting and data gathering concerning the housing clinic. This participation enriched my professional development.

As stationed at the Housing Clinic I had the opportunities to practise professional skills in various ways. The research gave the opportunities for me to interact with the clients and customers of the Housing Clinic. Through the research the service users' opinion about the Peltosaari project and how it will affect their daily activities and their future lives was revealed.

My professional development was enriched in positive ways due to the fact of accomplishing priority tasks. My priority tasks concentrated in attending meetings with staff and project managers. Also by attending seminars and public events in order to advertise and promote the Peltosaari project.

More priority tasks were the finding and illustrating of ideas in ways to advertise and promote the housing clinic. Giving help and even advice in any way it was needed for the well-being of the project and especially the housing clinic became an allover routine task for the researcher.

7.2 Achieved goals

My thesis work combined with my practical placements experiences has enlightened my professional development in parallel line with my personal life. The achievement of professional and personal goals was satisfactory.

I got the opportunity to study the structure, the goals and aims of the specific organization, Housing Clinic, and of the Peltosaari project as a whole. Observing and analyzing the professional skills and methods which are used to accomplish targets and results with the service-users and the clients, added to my professional experiences.

As a researcher I examined the role a social worker (sociologist) could play in such an organization as Peltosaari project by getting the opportunity to study and observe real social cases. Important professional experiences were gained through the social cases. Regarding social phenomena as a student of social sciences I achieved to understand the behaviors of the inhabitants of the area of Peltosaari, and I knowledge basic important social problems regarding the area and its residents.

As a researcher, regarding structural and hierarchical elements of Peltosaari project, I observed and analyzed the roles, relationships and power settings which are present in the Housing Clinic and in the project as a whole. I also understood the roles the workers and the clients play in this organization. Finally I studied the dynamics in power sharing between the executers of the project and the partners-investors.

All the above goals and aims were achieved by active participatory efforts and by participatory observation. Active participation was achieved with the help of actions such as: participation in the activities of the Housing Clinic and the Peltosaari project as a whole, observation, taking active part in meetings and conversations with service users, analyzing the methods used in field work or interviews and analyzing the data that have been collected.

Also, active participation was achieved through accomplishing duties and given tasks, assisting staff members, participating in meetings and discussions and interacting directly with clients. These efforts were highly supported by actions such as: interacting directly with clients, serving the service users, by participating in planning and research practices and by participating in planning and research practices.

7.3 Learning experiences

Through the research procedures of the thesis in parallel line with my placement working times as a student in the Peltosaari project learning experiences emerged. Such important learning experiences are mentioned below.

By interviewing four top heads in the Peltosaari project I found out that even I thought that I knew a lot about the project, tinnier details come out of the data analyzing. These tiny details in many cases changed in a lot of ways my prospects under which I have being seeing things during my placement at the Housing Clinic. Facts and things that seem to be obvious in my skeptical way of thinking had another point of view through the eyes of the interviewees.

From the above mentioned I learned that never to be sure about things because there is always another unclear side of the fact that only wisdom and experience can reveal. In other words as an interviewer I learned through the interviews that there is a lot of ways to approach matters and it depends on strategies and policies how facts and things are analyzed in working environments. As an interviewer I also discovered that during the interviews blank points were left unclear. I noticed that in some occasions during the interviews an answer given was not clear. Instead of trying to clarify the answer I continue the interview. These kinds of reactions create the blank points. These blank points ought to have been clarified with the snowball method that was used during the interviews in order to collect cyclical information.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Social aspects that initiate a social prospective in the policies of Peltosaari project are without doubt the Housing Clinic and the Peltosaari Parliament. Based on the findings it can be stated that there is a possibility of a healthier community development in the area of Peltosaari towards an inclusive policy. The findings also indicate that the area is an area with enormous social problems.

Hopefully all the above mentioned social elements and issues will be addressed, implemented or solved during the community development and community building of the area of Peltosaari. They will not have a big major social impact and social justice will not prevail in the lives of the inhabitants of Peltosaari if the same vital elements and issues are not taken into consideration towards achieving functional implementation. Such vital elements and issues are: refining communal services and decreasing levels of social exclusion. Strengthening social networks and improving the physical environment towards a community development in Peltosaari friendly to its inhabitants and to the environment.

This research study through its findings has revealed a lot of social problems that the residents of Peltosaari are facing. This thesis can initiate social work inside the Peltosaari project towards a more socially inclusive community development strategy in the Peltosaari area. This study with suggestions and recommendations can contribute to the creation of new policies that will serve the people of Peltosaari. I believe that this study has given a voice to the people of Peltosaari. Through this thesis their demands, ideas, hopes, thoughts, fears and insecurities can be heard.

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13 APPENDICES

13.1 APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire 1

Questions that were used during the data collecting process concerning the Peltosaari project as a whole were:

- 1) What is the connection between your organization (office, department, union) and the Peltosaari project?
- 2) What is the Peltosaari project?
- 3) Why is it created?
- 4) What are the needs for such a project? In reality, does it serve any needs? (Is there a need for it really?)
- 5) What kind of problems will it solve, if it is implemented?
- 6) Which are the strengths of the project?
- 7) Which are the weaknesses of the project?
- 8) What are the targets, goals, aims and visions of the Peltosaari project?
- 9) Until now 4-5 Peltosaari projects have been put on the shelves (left on paper). Do you believe that this one will pass that stage and be implemented?
- 10) What factors can lead to a termination of the project?
- 11) Are there any social problems that the project will address and solve?
- 12) Who benefits from the project?
- 13) This investment will bring profits. Whom will it benefit in terms of profit?
- 14) What will be in for the residents of Peltosaari regarding the Peltosaari project?
- 15) Will the project change the image of today's Peltosaari as poor, bad and excluded? And in what ways taking into consideration social and neighborhood aspects?
- 16) Does this area face a lot of problems?
- 17) I have heard about violence, (domestic, public), public harassments, anti-social behavior (alcoholic and drug abuse, youth nuisance) and rates of high crime in the area of Peltosaari. What can be the actions against such behavior? What should the project do about it?
- 18) Will the project help people's participation or involvement in community development or community work?
- 19) What are your wishes through the project for the local community?
- 20) How the Peltosaari project is connected to eco (energy)-efficiency realities (renewal or building)? What kind of ecological solutions does it propose?
- 21) Can you connect the Peltosaari project to diversity? Equality? Excluded groups? Social justice? Unemployment? Social inclusion? Poverty?
- 22) If you had the power, what would you change considering the project?

- 23) What will happen to the inhabitants with rental contracts? Will they be allowed to return to the area?
- 24) Is the project efficient in regeneration of properties?
- 25) What elements does the project still have to take into consideration?
- 26) In your opinion, what do residents think about the project?
- 27) What issues can the Peltosaari project address in terms of increasing the life style of the residents of Peltosaari?

13.2 APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire 2

Questions that were used during the data collecting process concerning the Housing Clinic were:

- 1) What is the Housing Clinic?
- 2) Why it is created?
- 3) What are the reasons of its existence?
- 4) What services does it offer?
- 5) What needs does it serve?
- 6) Is it really needed?
- 7) Has the Clinic a voice? What kind and to which extension?
- 8) What is the connection between the Peltosaari project and the Housing Clinic?
- 9) Which are the strengths of the Housing Clinic?
- 10) Which are the weaknesses of the Housing Clinic?
- 11) Did the Housing Clinic open its doors too early?
- 12) Why is it lacking in the field of clients or service users?
- 13) What can be done to bring residents of Peltosaari as service users or clients to the Clinic?
- 14) What can be done better?
- 15) What is the connection between the Housing Clinic and the Peltosaari Project?
- 16) In what ways does the Clinic contribute to local community participation and involvement?
- 17) Does it have social dimension? What kind of social dimension?
- 18) What kind of social problems does the Housing Clinic address?
- 19) Can you connect the Housing Clinic to diversity? Equality? Excluded groups? Social justice? Unemployment? Poverty? Social inclusion?
- 20) What are the targets, goals, aims and visions of the Housing Clinic?
- 21) What are your wishes through the Housing Clinic for the local community?
- 22) If you had the power, what would you change considering the Housing Clinic?
- 23) What elements does the Housing Clinic still have to take into consideration?
- 24) In your opinion, what do residents think about the Housing Clinic?

- 25) How can the functioning of the Clinic contribute to a better life style in the area of Peltosaari?
- 26) What is expected to be the life-line of the Clinic?
- 27) Is the Housing Clinic playing a role in changing the bad, poor and excluded image of the Peltosaari area? And in what ways taking into consideration social and neighborhood aspects?